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SUBJECT: G77 Begins the Second "South Summit" in Qatar

1. (U) Foreign Ministers of the Group of 77 UN bloc met June 13 in Doha as part of the second "South Summit." Heads of State, largely from the African, Pacific, and Arab regions, will meet June 15 and 16. The conference is expected to deal with issues of UN reform, international development assistance, and the economics of globalization. A final statement will take positions on Somalia, Iraq, and Palestine. The summit will also review the "Havana Program of Action," the product of the first South Summit in Cuba in 2000, which outlined specific steps on trade, development, and globalization. For Qatar, this event is an opportunity to demonstrate international leadership, at least in logistics. Qatar will also seek to enhance its Third World credentials at this meeting, to balance its growing security and commercial ties with the developed world.

Kings and President

2. (U) Forty-three heads of state or of government are expected to attend the summit. Prominent leaders from Arab states are the kings of Bahrain and Morocco and the presidents of Algeria, Yemen, Lebanon, Syria, and Sudan. The Emir of Abu Dhabi will attend in his capacity as president of the UAE. Saudi Arabia will send a fairly low representative -- Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs. From Africa, the presidents of South Africa and Nigeria will stand out among a larger African group. Approximately 120 official delegations are expected.

Qatari Foreign Minister

3. (U) In his remarks to the G77 foreign ministers, Qatari FM Hamad bin Jassim Al Thani said that developing countries have met their social and governance commitments and have liberalized their economies as called for in UN conferences. However, he said "our partners" in the developed world have not lived up to their commitments, specifically, to devote 0.7% of GDP to overseas development assistance. By doing so, he categorized Qatar, with per capita income in the top ten worldwide, in the "developing" category. He called for a close examination of the UN Millennium Declaration to secure "effective implementation of previous promises."

4. (U) HBJ noted that the Havana Declaration of 2000 has not been fully implemented. He called for speeding up implementation of these measures, which essentially are broad schemes to improve "south-south" cooperation. HBJ nodded to economic "cooperation between the north and the south," as Qatar, a major energy supplier to developed nations, must. He focused however on the complementary nature of "south-south" trade and investment, and supported the "political framework" put forth at the first South Summit. (NOTE. "North" and "south" are used here to reflect the G77 vernacular and viewpoint.)

Plan of Action

5. (U) Foreign Ministers agreed on two draft declarations, one on development and one on political issues. The Doha "plan of action" calls for attention to the former, which looks at problems of development, globalization, the WTO, and relations between advanced countries and the developing world. Some delegates noted that "south-south" cooperation on these matters needs to be looked at before blaming developed nations. Ministers agreed that external debt remains a heavy burden for low- and medium-income countries, and no complete solution has been found. They noted that only a few industrial countries have fulfilled their commitment to devote 0.7% of their GDP to overseas assistance.

6. (U) The political declaration will be limited; it will address conflicts in Somalia, Iraq, and Palestine. Some delegates reportedly disagreed about the using the phrase "peaceful means" as the way to solve these crises, but the wording made it into the draft text anyway. UN reform will be taken up by the summit but in a separate document. The aim will be to strengthen the world body. The Pakistani FM said his country was against giving a new, permanent Security Council seat to any country.

Comment

17. (SBU) There will be no ground-breaking document or action plan at this summit. We had expected the Qataris to do more to emphasize links between industrial and developing countries, but the FM has positioned Qatar as a "developing" nation rather than a rich one. This means that Qatar is playing to its 130-plus G77 audience rather than its primary trading partners and foreign investors. His finger-pointing at the West for not devoting 0.7% of GDP to overseas assistance cannot withstand close scrutiny, as Qatar is now one of the world's wealthiest countries per capita and has a fairly low aid budget.